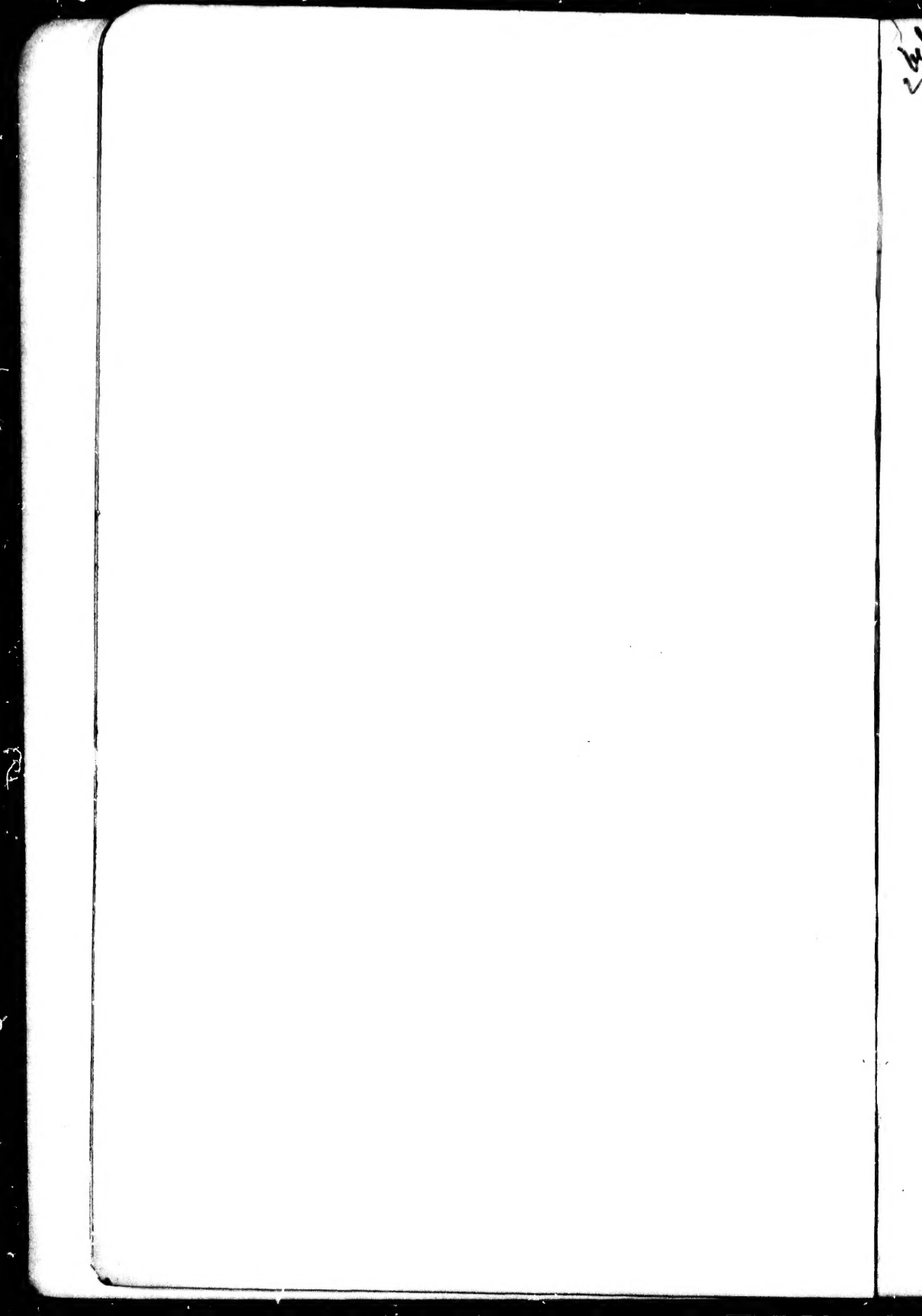




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CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES

IN NOVA SCOTIA..

BY

SAMUEL A. GREEN.

[REPRINTED FROM THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MASSACHUSETTS
HISTORICAL SOCIETY, FEBRUARY, 1888.]

CAMBRIDGE:

JOHN WILSON AND SON.

University Press.

1888.

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CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES IN NOVA SCOTIA.

DR. GREEN communicated copies of the following letters in the Society's Library, which contain interesting facts in regard to the church history of Nova Scotia. They relate to the dissenting ministers of an early period, of whom several were from New England, and graduates of Harvard. They furnish a glimpse of pioneer missionary work in that Province, which is not found elsewhere. The original manuscripts were given by Mr. John Fleet Eliot at the July meeting of 1865, and are now found in the volume marked "Andrews and Eliot Letters. 1662-1811."

To the Rev,d pasters And Christian Brethen of the Several Discenting Churches in Boston in the Massechusets-Bay In Newengland And in the towns Adjacent &c

The Memorial of the Con-gregational Church in Cornwallis in the County of Kings County in the province Of Novascotia . . .

Whereas God in his providence who orders the bounds of the Habitation of his people, after previously Removeing our Enemies, planted us in this Infant Colony (in the year 1760) and after our Continueing five years Destitute of a minister of the Gosple: by application to the South Association in Hartford County in the Colony Of Connecticut, we

obtain'd one : (viz) the Rev'd Benajah phelps, who Came to us ordain'd to the work of the ministry, and well Recommended (by Said Association) who after one years Continuance with us on probation took the pastoral Charge of us to our General Satisfaction. At which time We were in Circumstances to Afford him A Comfortable Maintainance, being a time of prosperity with us.

But the two years past things have taken A Different turn: the produce of our Village being much Cut Short, which occasioned So Great A Scarcity Among us, that we had not last Spring a Sufficiency of grain in town to Seed our Lands. And our Straits had Necessarily Increast to Extremity through our Inebility to purchase Seed, had not god Inclined the hearts of Some of our Father-Like Friends at Hallifax to Relive us By procuring us Seed At A Neighbouring Town, the produce of which hath well Answer'd our Expectations. Yet Notwithstanding the plenty this Year hath produced Among us, And our Numbers Which Consists of 133 famyls (Not 10 of which of the Establish'd Church) And between Eight & Nine hundred Souls: Our Lands also Good and Fertile: what by Means of the Late Distressing Scarcity, And the present Extraordinary Expences on our Dikes, Building A Meeting-house &c together with our necessary Expence For Clothing before we Could put our Selves in a way to make Any Proficiency in Mannifaturing our wooling, hath Involved us so far In Debt to our traders, that but very fue of us have Any produce By which we Can Relive our minister Under his present needy Circumstances, And without Some Relief from Some other Quarter, Our Said Minister Cannot Continue much Longer with us which if after a Seperation from the Society And Communion of our Christian friends in Newengland, And five years Continuance without any privilege of Gosple Administrations (According to our profession) Notwithstanding our many indeavours In that time to have them Established Among us, And the Expence Of Settling A Minister Building A meeting house &c We Say if After All this we Should be Left Destitute of Gosple Administrations by Neglecting to petition the Aid Of Such of our Christian Brethren As Are Able to Afford us Relief at So Critickle A Junctur as this, We Should be both wanting to Our Selves and posterity, And the Cause of Religeon among us, And be Reduced to A Worse Condition than At Our first Settling.

For As there is Now A Church in Building in this town And A Church minister provided free of any Expence to all proselites (viz the Rev,d M^r Eagle-Stone from Ireland, who First Appear,d here As A presbyterian, hath ben home for, And Last Spring Returnd with Orders) And Several of the More Loose And Unstable of our people have already gone Over to them. And the Door is open for many more: and If we now part with our Minister (who Seams willing to tarry with us on

very moderate terms) we of Consequence In A Few years Shall all be Churchmen or Nothing (ie) in point of Religion, as it Seams we Shall be in no Condition to Recettle Another Minister. And if our Circumstances [taunes] As here truly Represented: Clame Any Interest in your Pity And prayers, we trust you will Not be forgetfull of us: Nor Refuse to Contribute to our Relief, if you Judge the Nature and Circumstance of the Matter Require it.

It is Recommended that Any Donations for the Relief of our Rev.^d Paster be paid into the hands of the Rev.^d Andrew Elliot of Boston, and By him Remitted to Mallachi Salter Esq^r of hallifax by whome your Liberallity will be brought Safe to hand. your Compliance Will be Greatfully Acknowledged by us your Memoriallists, and the Interest of Religeon May be greatly Serv'd.

CORNWALLIS November 8th 1769

SAMUEL BECKWITH	} as Com ^{rs} For the chh & congregation
CALEB HUNTINGTON	
ISAAC BIGALOW	
JOHN NEWCOMB	
HEZEKIAH COGSWELL	
ELKANAH MORTON Jun ^r	

To The Rev.^d M^r ANDREW ELLIOT In Boston in Newengland.

HALIFAX January 18th 1770.

REV^d SIR's We were yesterday favor'd with the receipt of your Letter of the 12th December, and agreeable to your request, shall now furnish you with the best Accounts we are able to collect, of the Circumstances, of the Dissenting Clergy, and their Congregations, within this Province.

We have in all Eight dissenting Clergymen, settled here. Six of whom are Congregationalists, Viz^t The Rev^d M^r Wood Cheever, Seccomb, Moor, Phelps & Gannet, and two are Presbyterian Viz^t M^r Murdoch, & M^r Lyon.

The Rev^d M^r Wood at *Barrington*, came from New Engl^d. We can't learn that he has any Establish'd Salary, but that his people (yet in low Circumstances) are able to afford him but a scanty support.

The Rev^d M^r Cheever¹ at *Liverpool* is also from N^eEngl^d. He was promis'd a salary of about £80, p annum, but his people are not able to make good their Contract, and having a very numerous Family, finds it

¹ The Rev. Israel Cheever was born at Concord, Sept. 27, 1723, and graduated at Harvard College in the Class of 1749. He was settled for many years at Liverpool, Nova Scotia, where he died in June, 1812.

extremely difficult to support them, and is fearfull whether he shall not be obliged to remove to some other Province for a Subsistence.

The Rev^d M^r Seccomb¹ at *Chester* is also from N^eEngl^d. He has never had any Establish'd Salary, but receives about £20, p^a annum from his Parish, which contains a few Industrious, but poor People, He has expended all the Money he brought with him into this Country (and which we are inform'd was considerable) in Buildings & other improvements, on a new Farm, which has reduced him to very necessitous Circumstances: He has had some small relief from this Town. We cannot avoid Earnestly recommending this Gentleman, now advanced in years, — as an Object very worthy of a Charitable Assistance.

The Rev^d M^r Moor at *Halifax*, is from Ireland; He is paid a salary of £150, p^a annum (the whole of which he expends for the support of his Family) and but for the exertion of a few individuals of our small Congregation, (who contribute largely), this Gentleman's Subsistence would be too precarious, to induce his continuance amongst us.

The Rev^d M^r Murdoch at *Horton*, is also from Ireland. His present salary is about £70, p^a annum, but as his people are greatly in arrears to him, he complains for want of a sufficiency to support him comfortably.

The Rev^d M^r Phelps at *Cornwallis*, is from Connecticut. His salary by agreement is £80, p^a annum, but he says his People are not able to make good their Contract, and are of course very much in arrears. This Gentleman has purchas'd, a farm, built an House and made other considerable improvements which has much embarrass'd him, and we believe he at present struggles hard for a subsistence, Yet we must observe, that this Town is one of the most thriving settlements in the Province.

The Rev^d M^r Lyon at *Truro*, is from the Jerseys, — He has no stated salary, but we suppose he may receive about £50, p^a annum, He says he is often destitute of the necessary's of Life, Yet is encouraged to continue, from a prospect of being supported in a better manner in future, as his people are Industrious and are making great improvements.

¹ The Rev. John Seccombe was born at Medford, April 25, 1708, and graduated at Harvard College in the Class of 1728. He was settled as the minister of Harvard, Massachusetts, from Oct. 10, 1733, to September, 1757, and of Chester, Nova Scotia, from 1763 to the time of his death on Oct. 27, 1792. The first ordination sermon preached in the Province of Nova Scotia was delivered by him in Halifax on July 3, 1770. He was the author of a humorous poem entitled "Father Abbey's Will," first published as a broadside, and afterward reprinted in "The Gentleman's Magazine" and "The European Magazine," both for May, 1781, and in "The Massachusetts Magazine" for November, 1794. Our late associate, the Rev. John Langdon Sibley, prepared an edition of this poem which was privately printed in the year 1854.

The Rev^d M^r Gannett¹ at *Cumberland* is from New Engl^d his salary is about £80, p^a annum, which is paid him by the Exertion of a small number of generous people there, that from him we hear no Complaints.

From this succinct account Gentlemen, You will be able to form some Judgment of the present situation of the Dissenting Clergy amongst us, whose poverty may be easily accounted for, when it is consider'd that the most of the Inhabitants of this Colony are yet but in indifferent Circumstances, not having recover'd the Expence they have been at in Transporting themselves and Familys into the Coⁿtry, clearing new Lands, Buildings & Improvements thereon &c &c that their farms at present do but little more than afford them a coarse subsistence for their Familys. The people however do in general begin to thrive, and will in a little time, we hope, be able to afford their Ministers a better support.

Should you be pleas'd, Gentlemen, kindly to interest yourselves for the relief of your necessitous Brethren in the Ministry here, any charitable donations from the well affected among you, will be very seasonable, and accepted with great thankfulness, and we doubt not may tend to promote the cause of Religion and Piety among us; — We would beg leave to propose, that whatever Sums may be collected, may be put into the hands of some discreet & Judicious persons here, to be disposed of by them in due proportion.

The Gentlemen for whom we would solicit this Charity, We believe to be of unblemish'd reputations, and of exemplary Lives & Conversation.

We take this opportunity to express our gratefull acknowledgements, for the kind reception given to the Rev^d M^r Moor at Boston, and Especially for the recommendation of him & his Cause to the Gentlemen, your friends, in England, which is likely to prove Effectual, having received Letters from him since his arrival, — Encouraging us to hope he shall be able to raise something considerable.

We are Gentlemen,

Your Most Obed^t & humb. Serv^{ts}

BN GERRISH.

MALACHY SALTER

To The Rev^d Mess^{rs} ANDREW ELLIOT, and SAMUEL COOPER.

¹ The Rev. Caleb Gannett was born at Bridgewater, Aug. 22, 1745, and graduated at Harvard College in the Class of 1763. He was ordained at Hingham, Oct. 12, 1767, and was at once settled over the society at Amherst and Cumberland, Nova Scotia; but from the inadequate support given him, he returned to New England in 1771. He was a tutor at Harvard College from 1773 to 1780, and Steward from 1779 to the time of his death, which took place at Cambridge, April 25, 1818. He was chosen a member of this Society, Oct. 31, 1797. See Collections, 2d ser. vol. viii. p. 277, for a memoir of him.

HALIFAX May 10. 1770

GEN^r I have now before me your Esteem'd favor of 23^d of April, address'd to Mr. M. Salter and myself, and thank you, in behalf of the Worthy dissenting Clergy of this province, for the generous Contribution you have obtain'd for their present relief, and which will, I doubt not, be received by them, with the Utmost Gratitude.

Mr Salter is now at Boston, and will consult you upon the proper distribution of the Money, he being much better acquainted with the particular Circumstances, and wants of Each of the Gentlemen, than I am; It is my opinion however, that if the Collection could be laid out in necessary provisions for the Use of their families, such as *Pork flour, Meal, Chocolate, Coffee, Tea, Sugar &c* &c. it might be more advantageous, than if the *Money* was given them, those necessary articles being much dearer here, than with you. If you should concur with me herein. Mr Barrett will be so good as to see, that the provisions are purchas'd, and proportion'd, as may be advised, and sent hither in different packages, and directed, when the same shall be forwarded by the first Conveyance.

I Sincerely wish that Mr Moor may be so happy as to obtain from the Charitably disposed in England somewhat that may prove of a more lasting benefit to the cause we would promote: of which you shall be made acquainted, so soon as anything certain relative to the matter may arrive.

I am Gent^l with much respect

Your Most Obedient & Humble Serv^t

BN GERRISH.

P S. Since writing the above I have seen the Rev^d Mr Seccombe, who is desirous that any proportion of the Sum given that may be assign'd him, may be sent in money.

To the Rev^d Doctors ELIOT & COOPER

REV^d S-R. Some Time last September I receiv'd Forty Dollers from Benj. Gerrish Esq^r at Halifax, Part of the Donation of some Charitable Gentlemen at Boston for the Relief of the indigent dissenting Minister of this Province, which came very seasonably to me and I have Reason to think to others also — About which Time I was invited by a Letter from Malachy Salter Esq^r to go to Halifax and preach a Month, Dr. Moore being gone — I accordingly have been, and Mr Salter informed me that I was peculiarly indebted to yourself and Doctor Cooper for the Donation, And I now return hearty Thanks for the same, wishing to yourself and others a better Reward than this World affords — you will please to thank those charitable Gentlemen

on my Behalf—At Halifax I met with the Rev^d Mr Seccombe of Chester and the Rev^d Mr Gannet of Cumberland, Gentlemen whom I had never been acquainted with before, and was much pleased to find such serious and good Ministers in this Province, for I have not before been acquainted with any one, except Mr Wood, who has consented last Summer, I am informed, that his People should be no longer obliged to give him any support, nevertheless has offered to preach this Winter for Nothing as they call it.

This Town is very much detach'd from the rest of the Province, to the northward and eastward there is no regular settled Town nigher than Annapolis, and to the southward Barrington or Cape Sable is the highest which is Twelve Leagues hence — and Halifax Fifty — There is a comfortable Unity in Opinion amongst us in this Part of the Town call'd Cape forchu, about Two Thirds of the Inhabitants here, have laid themselves under some Obligation to give me Fifty Pounds pr Annum, but I have not received the One half of that, for the Time that I have preached her^e since last summer was Three Years, the People not being well able — A Congregational Church was gathered here, last September Three Years ago, in which I have to this Day officiated as their Minister — The other Part of the Town settled on a River called Tabogue are less happy than we in Regard of Unity — The Rev'd Messrs Reed & Conant of Bridgewater if I mistake not were here last Spring to assist them to Unity, and so far succeeded as to persuade them to meet in One Assembly, till the last Sabbath, when they parted again, and One Part have Mr Scott a layman among them, & the other Part Mr Moulton a Baptist Minister from Brimfield

From Your humble Servant, & Fellow-Labourer in the Gospel

NEH^m PORTER¹

YARMOUTH IN NOVA SCOTIA NOV. 16. 1770.

To The Rev^d Dr. ANDREW ELIOT. In Boston New England.

¹ The Rev. Nehemiah Porter was born at Ipswich, March 27, 1720, and graduated at Harvard College in the Class of 1745. He was settled at Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, in 1767, where he remained until 1771, when he returned to Massachusetts. He died at Ashfield, Massachusetts, Feb. 29, 1820, at the advanced age of ninety-nine years and eleven months.